

Frequently Asked Questions

Request for Expression of Interest – EOI-2-10-19

Q. *What is the purpose of this Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)?*

- A. The purpose of this EOI is to seek innovative and effective solutions/projects to address current and upcoming affordable rental housing gaps in larger southern communities/regions and communities in the Northern Administration District that demonstrate need and demand.

Q. *Why has Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) changed from a Request for Proposal (RFP) to an EOI with no identified programs?*

- A. Starting 2018, SHC replaced the more lengthy RFP with the EOI to simplify the full application for eligible sponsors.

Q. *What is the process for project approval?*

- A. Sponsor applications are part of a competitive selection process undertaken by SHC to ensure the most appropriate, financially viable, cost-effective projects focusing on provincial priorities receive funding. Complete proposals submitted by eligible sponsors for projects in communities with demonstrated need at the sole discretion of SHC may be invited back to complete a full application.

After a full application is completed and received by SHC, the eligible sponsor may receive a Conditional Approval Letter outlining additional funding conditions.

After all conditions are satisfied, SHC will provide a proceed to construct letter along with a mortgage and Project Development and Operating Agreement.

Q. *Why are support services part of the application for housing?*

- A. Provincial priorities are to assist those households who are unable to access or maintain affordable, stable housing due to one or more characteristics that create unusual barriers to housing. These households may be experiencing physical disabilities, mental health issues, addictions issues, behavioral issues and cognitive disabilities, or a number of these issues concurrently.

Often these households require support services in order to both maintain occupancy in the housing unit and meet the requirements of a lease agreement with the sponsor. Examples of support services include counselling, physical accessibility, addictions management, life-skills training and support for mental health.

Securing support service funding and support services in and of itself are the responsibilities of the sponsor.

Q. *What is an above balanced market vacancy rate?*

- A. This is an economic indicator which measures the percentage of vacant units in a rental housing market for the sponsor's proposed unit size or type. SHC considers a balanced market vacancy at approximately three per cent. Communities showing an above balanced market vacancy may be considered as having a surplus of suitable and affordable units for the intended client. The vacancy rates of many communities are available from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Q. *What is need and demand? And why is it so important?*

- A. This refers to a recognized need for affordable housing in a community or region. However, it is essential to establish whether there is a demand that people are willing and able (for example, to afford the rent) to access the housing and services to be provided before developing.

Collecting data, including statistics, housing market trends, the availability and appropriateness of existing housing options, community profiles, local surveys and wait lists, helps determine whether or not a development should proceed and if so, what design, market and service conditions should be incorporated.

Q. *What is the amount of funding available for projects?*

- A. Programs and funding levels are not yet confirmed. However, SHC will fund the minimum amount that a project needs in order to achieve affordable rents and financial viability.

Q. *What are the requirements and eligibility around funding that are known right now?*

- A. Eligible sponsors include but are not limited to the community housing sector (e.g. non-profit housing organizations and rental co-operatives); Municipal Governments and their agencies; Indigenous Governments and Organizations (including First Nations Bands, Tribal Councils and Métis organizations); and Private entrepreneur/builder/developers. Sponsors must be registered in Saskatchewan, and in good standing with SHC.

Proposed total household annual income for tenants must be at or below incomes under Saskatchewan Household Income Maximum (SHIM) Low. Careful consideration needs to be given to actual incomes of the targeted households and the rental rates affordable under those incomes.

SHC is unable to fund on-reserve housing or licensed facilities.

A minimum for four units must be developed.

Eligible sponsors are encouraged to explore partnerships and examine innovative funding options to maximize the number of units that can be developed and ensure the long-term financial viability of proposed projects.

This EOI will consider acquisition, conversion of non-residential or new construction accommodation. Acquisition and renovation of existing buildings will be encouraged in communities with an above-average balanced vacancy rate.

Q. What is the SHIM-Low?

- A. The SHIM-Low is calculated based on gross annual household income and the appropriate unit size for the household (based on National Occupancy Standards).

SHIM-Low effective July 1, 2019 is:

One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four-Bedroom
\$37,000	\$45,000	\$55,500	\$66,500

Careful consideration must be given to actual incomes of the intended tenants and the rental rates affordable to those incomes. "Hard-to-house" households typically do not reach the limits of SHIM-Low.

Q. Can I apply if my community's population is under 5,000?

- A. All applications submitted to SHC will be reviewed. However, priority is given to proposals meeting the eligibility criteria as identified in the EOI.

Q. When will proponents be told if their proposal is successful?

- A. SHC's goal is to advise all proponents of the results of the EOI by the end of March 2020.